

elected president of the conference for 1930, and Erle Fisk Young, Ph. D., chairman of the Program Committee, plans for the Santa Barbara meeting are well under way. "Social Progress and the Law" has been selected as the conference theme, but the program will range over the whole field of interests covered by the standing sections on health, family and child welfare, delinquency, organization and administration, education, recreation, industry, and racial and citizenship problems.

Recreation Center will be headquarters—an ideally central location with meeting places and hotels in close proximity.

Advance information regarding conference plans will appear in the February issue of the conference quarterly bulletin, or may be obtained from the executive secretary, Miss Anita Eldridge, Exposition Auditorium, San Francisco.

**Medical Summer Courses, University of California.** The University of California Medical School will offer summer courses for graduates in medicine from June 2 to 21, 1930.

The first week will be devoted to a review of recent advances in fundamental sciences and in clinical medicine and surgery.

During the second and third weeks, courses of two weeks' duration, similar to those of the past five years, will be offered in general medicine, surgery, the specialties, and laboratory subjects.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### President's Letter to the Members

To the Members:

The present unfortunate confusion regarding the Coffey-Humber cancer treatment appears to call for some statement in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. The following is a personal statement made in an effort to clarify this subject:

There is grave danger that contemplation of the glorious results of a true cancer cure may so stimulate the imagination of some of us that the necessity for sober proof will be overlooked.

Doctors Coffey and Humber have at no time claimed that their treatment is a *cure*. They have at all times in their statements indicated that much and prolonged critical research must intervene before a positive statement can be made.

The press, on the other hand, has, while generally quoting the authors of the treatment fairly, so magnified certain phases, and permitted its own obvious enthusiasm to dominate the stories, that the unscientific public has quite generally accepted the treatment as a cure.

The result of such publicity is most regrettable. The judgment of the value of the treatment has been removed entirely from scientific environment and vested in the public, which can have no scientific basis for opinion. A painful result of publicity, and one regretted by Doctors Coffey and Humber, is that many cancer sufferers who cannot avail themselves of the treatment will, in hope, delay timely operations.

Another result is the insurmountable impediment to scientific work, which the vast amount of unsolicited material constitutes.

The present status of the treatment, according to its authors, is that in certain cases its exhibition softens tumor masses and reduces pain. In a very few cases, there has been an apparent cure. Sufficient time has not elapsed to announce a cure in any case. Too few cases have been followed through to justify opinion.

Doctors Coffey and Humber do not claim a cure. They have confidence that their treatment has great promise, and they wish time for research.

No final scientific opinion can be formed short of some few years from this date. Preliminary opinions can be of no immediate value. Unfavorable opinions must be unscientific unless based on evidence of value comparable to that required to demonstrate success. It is devoutly hoped that CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE may at some time be permitted to publish fulfillment of all hopes for the Coffey and Humber treatment.

Meanwhile let us avoid judgment, whether favorable or unfavorable.

MORTON R. GIBBONS,  
*President, California Medical Association.*

### Subject of Following Letter: Postponement of Presentation of Paper by Doctors Coffey and Humber

To the Editors:

Because of the fact that it has been announced that we are to present a paper, "A Preliminary Report of a Potent Extract from the Cortical Substance of the Suprarenal," before the San Francisco County Medical Society on March 11, 1930, we are sending you a copy of a letter sent by us to the president of that society. The letter is as follows:

February 27, 1930.

Dr. Harold K. Faber,  
President, San Francisco County Medical Society,  
San Francisco, California.

Dear Doctor Faber:

Knowing that the San Francisco County Medical Society is desirous of having a complete report of the work on the extract of the cortical substance of the suprarenals, and that a committee from the society can aid materially in determining the results obtained in the series of cases now being studied, we would be very glad to have such a committee appointed by you from among the members of the San Francisco County Medical Society.

We would also welcome the postponement of our appearance before the society from March 11, 1930, until the general meeting in April, or at such later time as the above committee is ready to report its findings also.

Very truly yours,

W. B. COFFEY,  
JOHN D. HUMBER.

The meeting has been postponed to some date to be announced later and, in order that members may have a basis for discussion when the material is presented, we are setting out in this letter the premises which we believe to be true and upon which we have based our investigations and in support of which we believe we can produce experimental evidence. The premises are:

1. Nature has provided certain controls or "governors" in our physiological make-up, among which is a control or stabilizer of *tissue growth*.

2. This control or stabilizer of the development and multiplication of tissue cells is of the nature of an active principle or hormone.

3. This hormone is produced by certain cellular elements of the body which are found to exist in considerable amounts in the cortex of the suprarenal glands.

4. This hormone or active principle may be produced in other parts of the body yet to be determined. We have found that extracts made from other tissues have what we think is probably an inhibitory effect on cellular growth where normal cellular growth has been disturbed.

5. This hormone or active principle is found in a highly potent form with unmistakable effect upon malignant cellular growth in extracts made from portions of the cortex of the suprarenal glands.

6. This extract containing the active principles has a destructive effect upon malignant tissue, causing its necrosis and death, without destruction of normal tissues.

Very truly yours,

W. B. COFFEY  
JOHN D. HUMBER.